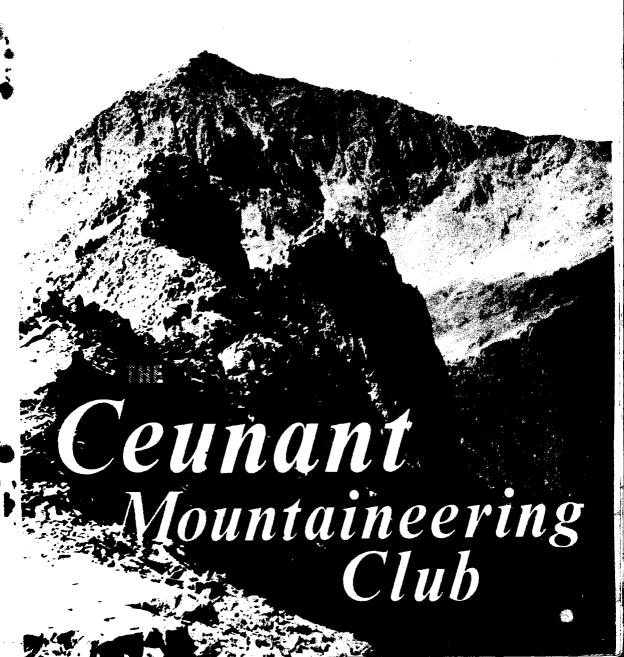
NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 1964



## EDITORIAL

Another Annual General Meeting has gone by, and a new committee has been elected to run the club's affairs for the ensuing year. There was an unusually large number of officers resigning from the committee this time, and to these gentlemen we give our thanks and appreciation for the work they have done on behalf of the Ceunant Club.

The most exacting jobs in any organisation are without doubt those of General Secretary and Treasurer, and we must therefore pay a special tribute to Mike Connelly and Ron Bearman, who have performed these tasks with keenness and efficiency, Mike for two years and Ron for three years.

At three successive A.G.M's we have been presented with masses of statistics by the various outdoor meets secretaries, purporting to demonstrate the ever decreasing number of members attending official meets. This year's ration evoked no comment from the meeting, and indeed it is difficult to add to what has already been said on the subject, except to say that the club exists to provide facilities for mountaineering for its members, and this it does, with a comprehensive (some think too comprehensive) outdoor programme. If members prefer to climb in private groups rather than attend meets there is not much we can do about it. The only pity is that the figures might give to outsiders the impression of a moribund, inactive club, which is far from being the case.

What we don't need any statistics to tell us is the increasingly late starts of the Wednesday evening meetings. Anyone arriving at the Cambridge at nine o'clock these days can be sure of having the place to himself, and any newcomer wandering in might be forgiven for wondering if this was a thriving club he was coming to. This really doesn't matter, however, until we come to one of the rare lecture evenings - when the unfortunate lecturer finds himself alone at the time he was told the talk was due to start! However, it is hoped that, for lecture evenings at least, we can put the matter right by a gentle compromise - start a little later, browbeat members into

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arriving a little earlier.

All we hope is that, having got everyone fully organised, we don't find that the manager of the Cambridge has let our room to somebody else!

Explosives have been in the news in mountaineering circles during the past year. In one instance, the removal of Hounds Head Buttress, which had become unstable, was done with the advice and consent of all interested parties. The other occasion was the destruction of part of Yellowslacks rock in Derbyshire for what seems to be a quite unjustifiable reason - namely, to stop people climbing on them. The owner of the rocks, which have been described as 'a natural open air gymnasium', said that his sheep were being killed by hooligans rolling boulders down the cliffs, and it rather looks as though he is seeking the removal of temptation by means of gelignite.

We have every sympathy with farmers who suffer damage to their property, broken down fences, litter, and all the other evils which occasionally follow in the wake of a few irresponsible climbers. But there must be better ways of dealing with the situation - one doesn't normally resort to blowing the house down to stop burglars breaking in:

The Peak Park Planning Board have taken the unusual step of making a compulsory purchase order to give public access to 3000 acres of moorland around Yellowslacks and neighbouring Downstone Clough. The order is being contested. Whatever happens, it is to be hoped that a satisfactory solution can be worked out - one that does not involve the pointless destruction of part of the Peak District scenery.

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the Editor, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Committee.

Publications Editor: I.D. Corbett, 420, Shirley Road, Birmingham, 27.

### CLUB NEWS

### INDOOR MEETS

Evening meets, which used to be a regular feature of our club, have rather fallen by the wayside recently. Perhaps this is not altogether an unhealthy sign, as part of the reason seems to be that members are getting out so frequently at weekends that they have no time for evening meets!

Nevertheless, we should like to revive the habit of monthly meetings, and if sufficient support is forthcoming from club members, we can obtain outside speakers in the winter months.

Where possible, meetings will be on the first Wednesday in each month.

The programme until June is:

April 15th Slide evening. Our slide evenings are usually 8.0 p.m. held early in the winter, and so tend to be mainly shots of people on Alpine peaks or outside huts. Now is your chance to see slides of people sheltering from British rair.

May 6th Dolomites evening. Quite a few members are 8.0 p.m. thinking of making the long journey this year, so an evening swopping information on the Dolomites should be of interest. Members who have been will be talked into showing their slides, and a film, 'Climbing in the Dolomites', has been booked.

June 3rd Civic Centre. Why stay in when the evenings 6.0 p.m. are light? The usual midsummer madness at Brassington is suggested - last year this was an excellent evening of varied sport. If anyone thinks they are too good for Brassington, there are now some fine free climbs in Dovedale.

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### OUTDOOR MEETS

The Outdoor Meets programme until the end of June is:

May 1st - 3rd	FFESTINIOG	Leader, P. Hay.
" 15th-19th	WASDALE	Whitsun. Leader, D. Stokes.
" 29th-31st	OGWEN	Camping by Llyn Bochlwyd; Leader, A. Mynette.
June 12th-14th	LLANBERIS	Leader to be announced.
" 26th-28th	THE RIVALS	Leader, J. Pettet.

After a break of two years, it is hoped to issue out membership cards again. They may yet be of some use for their original purpose - that of enabling the owners to gain access to disputed territory in Derbyshire!

The Tyn-Lon work programme arranged for the week-end of the annual dinner (roof repairs and kerb construction) were completely foiled by adverse weather conditions and the non-arrival of part of the materials which had been ordered. However, the club do now possess some fire extinguishers, and members are warned in passing that these are for use only in the event of fire.

We offer our congratulations and best wishes to Mike and Rita Connelly, who were married on 4th April, at St. Patricks Church, Dudley Road.

# COMMITTEE 1964/5

The New Honorary General Secretary is:

Mr. B.A. Jones,

114, Dagger Lane, West Bromwich;

and the man to whom to pay your money,

Honorary Treasurer

Hut Warden

Honorary Treasurer
Mr. A. Mynette

Mr. A. Mynette W.H.Yale, 37, Wilsford Road, B'ham.14. 68, Grace Rd. Tipton. It came as a great shock to us all to hear of the death of Dick Cadwallader in a climbing accident, during a cliff rescue exercise with the South Devon Outward Bound School. Dick had been a member of the club for several years and was well known both for his skill as a climber, and his comradeship as a clubman. The funeral was in Devon, and a wreath was sent from the Club.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 26th February, 1964.

This year's AGM was nearly a non-starter. Due to yet another double booking by the management of the 'Cambridge', the early arrivals on the appointed evening discovered another crowd firmly established in our rocz. However, after some smart last second organising, the venue was moved a few hundred yards down the road to the 'Prince of Wales', and arrangements were made back at base to divert latecomers.

Accordingly, forty-five minutes late and at a different Pub. from the one appearing in the notice convening the meeting, the eighth Annual General Meeting of the Ceunant Mountaineering Club got under way. About forty members were present. Apologies were received from Tony and Gill Daffern, and the meeting's congratulations were offered to them on the birth of their son that same afternoon.

# Chairman's remarks

The Chairman said that, as was usual on this occasion, he wished to thank members of the committee for their work and support during the past year. Although this sentiment may seem a little automatic, it was very sincerely meant, for the committee had really worked as a team.

Tyn Lon - Once again, the most outstanding feature of the year had been the progress at Tyn Lon. The income from the hut fund was higher than ever, and because of this, we had been able to pay off the hut loans in full, after only

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five years of the originally envisaged ten year period. This was a considerable achievement, and much credit must go to Bill Yale for the way he had handled the outside bookings. The increased demand for the hut from outside clubs probably stemmed from its being advertised in 'Mountaineering', and the BMC circulars.

Regarding the cottage itself, Mike said that he would have to repeat the comments of the past two years AGM's - the drying room now was nearly completed!

B.M.C. - The Chairman had attended, on behalf of the club, all six Meetings of the B.M.C. committee held during the year. There were now one hundred and seventeen member clubs, and schools membership had increased to eighty. Quoting from the annual report of the B.M.C., the chairman said that 1963 would go on record as the year in which the Glenbrittle memorial hut was started; a karabiner was produced commercially to a BMC specification; a new set of guide books on 'Rock Climbs in The Peak' was put into production; and the BMC had become a government-grant-aided-body - to the extent of £300.

Club activities - The Chairman said that once again his 'bete noir', or annual dance, had made a loss. The main reasons for the partial failure of the dance, he said, were poor attendance and late arrival. The Committee were firmly of the opinion, however, that in spite of the loss, this was still a function which should be held annually, and the next one was planned for a Friday night early in December.

Referring to the Cambridge, Mike said that it was originally thought that the premises were to be demolished in March of this year, but apparently there had been an extension of the time, and we were now all right for another two years.

The Chairman made some kind remarks about the Newsletter, and said that it was pleasing to find that quite a few members were willing to devote their time to writing articles for it. The club Journal, being produced by Gill and Tony Deffern, should be going to print shortly.

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The Chairman closed by saying that if the present rate of progress continued, we should, more than ever, have a club of which members could be proud to belong.

### Secretary's Report

Mike Connelly said that committee meetings had been well attended during the year. He mentioned Stan Storey, who had recently resigned his membership following a move from Birmingham, and said the club should not forget its debt to members like Stan, by whose efforts we enjoy the excellent facilities now available.

Six new members joined in 1963, and one of our current prospective members was at present on a Falkland Islands survey, where he was no doubt spreading the fame of the C.M.C. from Rio southwards.

The Secretary said that the year had been a busy one for the committee. Apart from our normal weekends of climbing, we had been able to offer members several social events, such as a buffet dance, bonfire party, etc., not to mention lectures organised by other bodies for which members were able to book through the club, notably talks by Lionel Terray, Chris. Bonington, and Don Whillans.

Mike drew members attention to the increasing range of the club library, which, under the care of John Daffern, was being continually extended.

The Secretary said that as he was expecting to move from Birmingham during the coming year, he would not be able to continue in office, and he closed by thanking everyone for their support during his period in office.

The Chairman thanked Mike Connelly for his work during his two years as Secretary. He said that Mike's drive and keenness had really made itself felt in the club, and it was a matter for regret that he was having to resign office.

### Treasurer's Report

Ron Bearman presented the accounts, which had been previously circulated to members. He went through the figures in detail, explaining that, although we had only just broken even on the general fund, the hut fund had had a very successful year. With the paying off of the hut loans, the club now had no outstanding liabilities. In answer to a question about rates on Tyn Lon, he said that as yet no increased assessment had been received in respect of the various improvements made to the cottage, but it was probable that this would happen.

The Treasurer, too, was unable to continue in office for another year, and the Chairman called for a vote of thanks to him for his work during his three years in charge of the club's finances.

# Indoor Meets Secretary's Report

Dave Stokes said that this year we had been unfortunate in that only one outside speaker had been obtained. Several anticipated meets over the past few months had not All this had resulted in a programme of a materialised. more social nature, with two members evenings, a debate, a film night, and two 'indoor/outdoor' meets - a Wednesday evening trip to Habberley valley, and the 'Treasure Hunt'. Thanks were given to Roger Bagley for his help with the rally, and to Tony Daffern for organising the debate. Average attendance at official indoor meets had been 30% of members. highest attendance being 33 and lowest 12. Dave said that these figures were no inspiration to any future indoor meets secretary, and suggested that a bigger effort was required by members in attending these meets. Also, members had got into the habit of arriving at 8.30 for a lecture which was scheduled to start at 7.30. During the year he had twice been in the embarrassing position when almost the first person to arrive at the talk was the speaker, who then waited three quarters of an hour while members drifted in.

In closing, Dave put forward the suggestion that a speaker of some eminence should be engaged for the forthcoming

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year, on similar lines to the Don Whillans venture in 1962.

Considerable discussion followed and one member questioned the necessity of having indoor meets at all. A vote was taken on this, resulting in an almost unanimous decision in favour of continuing the Wednesday evening lecture/film programmes.

The following useful points emerged from the discussion:

- (a) One reason for the present lethargy was that insufficient notice was given to members of forth-coming lectures. It was felt that, in future, some high pressure advance publicity was necessary, including the circularising of members by post some weeks before the talk. In addition, a list of provisional dates for lectures should be published as soon as possible.
- (b) Lectures should start later, as many members, particularly those who were married, could not get into town by 7.30. If a lecture evening clashed with the arranging of meet transport for the following weekend, then such arrangements would have to be rade before the meeting rather than after it.
- (c) It may be necessary in the near future for the Club to start paying for lecturers. We had been fortunate in the past in getting people to come and talk to us free, but we could not expect to go on getting good lecturers for nothing.

# Outdoor Meets Secretary's Report

John Pettet said that there had been several alterations to the meets list as originally published. The Wasdale meet, last Whitsun, was cancelled due to lack of support, and the Elan Valley trip was called off because of lack of camping facilities. In addition, two other meets - to Yorkshire, and the Malverns - were cancelled, and replaced by visits to Ffestiniog and Stanage.

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The average number of members attending meets was ten; and taking non-members into account, the average was sixteen for day meets and twelve for weekend meets. Analysing the figures further, it emerged that only four members had attended more than fifteen of the twenty-five meets on the programme; another twelve had attended between six and fifteen meets, and thirty five members had attended no John thought this showed that something was meets at all! wrong either with the meet programme or with the members possibly a little of both. He thought the outdoor meets programme was too long, and could with advantage be pruned: also, not enough official meets were held in North Wales. With regard to the 35 non-attenders, John said that surely some of these could make a bigger effort. Obviously, there are some people who find it impossible to get away, but 35 is a lot, especially as most of them live fairly close to Birmingham.

The remaining statistics concerned the weather. Out of 44 meet days, there were only 9 on which no climbing was possible.

Coming on to club activities, John said that climbing standards were quite high, but he thought that we did not, as a club, give sufficient encouragement to novices. A lot of good material had come through the club, but had gone elsewhere.

John closed by thanking all meet leaders for their support in carrying out the season's programme.

# Hut Warden's Report

Bill Yale said that during the year there had been a further increase in the popularity of Tyn Long amongst visiting clubs. Seventeen outside parties had used the hut, and fourteen requests from other clubs had had to be turned down. There was also a slight increase in the use of the cottage by our own members.

Only one organised working party had been held during the year, the main object of which was to proceed as far

as possible with the construction of the drying room. meet was very well attended, and Bill thanked all those who had given him their support. A lot of work was done, in spite of the fact that much time was spent dealing with the unexpected flooding of the cottage. All that now remained to be done to the drying room was the building of the outlet duct through the roof, and fixing suitable clothes racks inside. The question of how we were going to pay for the electricity used was still under discussion, but a likely solution was for the club to pay the Electricity Board through a quarterly meter, and members and visitors pay the club through two slot meters (one for the lights and one for the drying room). These slot meters would belong to the club, and this would mean that, instead of the present system whereby members deduct money paid from their hut fees, the club would subsidise the electricity charge by adjusting the meter calibration. problem remaining would then be to work out the fairest way for the club to recover the subsidy. The obvious way was to increase the hut fees, but it was generally felt that any such increase should not fall on full members of the Bill said there was certain to be a period of experiment once the scheme was started, and any suggestions that members might have would be welcomed.

Regarding future developments, Bill said we intended permanently sealing off the door in the second kitcher, and replacing it with a window, under which we could put a second cooking bench. The outhouse door would then be used as the back entrance, possibly with a porch covering it and the outside water tap.

Although no frost damage had been reported this year, Bill reminded members to use the drain tap during the winter months. This, together with the lagging which had been done, should eliminate frost trouble from now on. Closing, Bill said the year had been fairly successful as far as Tyn Lon was concerned, at least financially, though he thought the hut might be used a little more by members in between meets.

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## Amendment to constitution

The constitution had been redrafted during the year to incorporate the numerous amendments that have been passed. Copies had been circulated to members prior to the meeting, and approval was now sought to renumber the clauses of the amended document. This was passed unanimously. At this point in the meeting, all offices were declared vacant, and voting took place for the new committee.

# COMMITTEE FOR 1964

Chairman: M.R. Kerby

Vice-Chairman: A.M. Daffern

Secretary: Basil Jones

Treasurer: A. Mynette

Indoor Meets Secretary: G.R. Costello

Outdoor Meets Secretary: P.D. Hay

Hut Warden: W.H. Yale

Publications Editor: I.D. Corbett

Members: R.F. Bearman, P. Holden

Non-Committee Appointments

Librarian J. Daffern

Auditors F. Price, C.J.Wilkinson

## Two Soakings I Have Enjoyed by Roger Lavill

When we wake up to the sound of rain lashing against the hut or drumming on our tent, we find it all too easy to resign ourselves to a lazy day. Many of the days I best remember however, in my short climbing history, were those

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when the inclement conditions brought out the fighting spirit in the party. Some are born wet, some achieve wetness, and some have wetness thrust upon them!

The first soaking was achieved on the Devil's Staircase, and belongs to the final category. A rapid journey along the A.5 with Robin, a brisk walk up to the shore of Llyn Idwal, and, when the tent had been pitched, a stroll with several other club members to the foot of Glogwyn y Geifr. It was an unsettled sort of day, and we had been told that the climb was one of the best to be had on the Kitchen Cliffs. By the time we were ready to start there were four of us in the party, Arthur, Nick, Robin and myself. The first pitch, according to our information, was the most difficult, and since it was greasy and I had a pair of felt-soled klets, it was my I found the cold worse than the wet, and didn't know then that the pitch could have been avoided by an easy traverse. The next two pitches followed pleasantly, but before we were all up, the rain started. There were only two more pitches, but the rain could not wait for us. Feeling pleased with myself, I started up a steep wall towards the "Crack with a stance in its depths" promised by the Guide. I climbed that wall quickly, encouraged by the thought of shelter and the cries of my drowning companions. Alas, on reaching the belay, I found I had been cheated; while sheltered from the direct rain, a small waterfall from the last pitch (The Drainpipe) played on the small of my back. Robin soon joined me, and led his gurgling way up The Drainpipe - a most pitiful sound. He belayed on a chockstone in the full force of the elements. After bringing up Nick, I climbed up to Robin: this involved blocking the pipe like a plug, and the water soon filled my breeches. The steep, open exit from the chimney beyond the chockstone was very pleasant. bedraggled Arthur who brought up the rear; he had plugged the drainpipe more completely than the rest of us, and arrived gasping at the top in short pants.

From the bottom of the Cliff we looked again at the first pitch. It was a veritable waterfall, and we wouldn't have considered starting it.

What we would have missed!

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The second soaking must be considered in the middle category. Apart from a rather cold wind, the day was good - for Skye, and if we got wet, it would be upon our own heads - and so it was.

Our stay on Skye had been plagued with late starts, and ll o'clock found us in Coire na Creiche, heading apace for Sgurr Na Fhaedain. "Gully - probably no equal in British Isles....1300 feet....over 20 pitches...some monstrous.... dry weather." So says the S.M.C. Guide of The Waterpipe Gully, the route we were heading for. It was a dry day; but there had been a considerable amount of rain during the previous week, so we were not surprised to hear a hollow splashing sound which seemed to come from more than one waterfall. Our aim was to climb the Gully by as direct a route as possible. The first problems gave us no trouble, but then we came to the famous 80-foot pitch. Here the Gully is blocked by a steep loose wall, bounded on the left by a vertical chimney which is the direct route, first taken by Harland and Abraham. The chimney had its waterfall, and was full of a dense growth of moss, while the wall was slimy, and we were doubtful of its stability. We had kept dry so far and were not sufficiently stirred to attempt the chimney, so we tried the wall. Robin led about half of it, but didn't like the look of the upper section, so he contrived a belay and brought me up. I tried several ways but still couldn't find a safe exit, so eventually we got round the pitch by way of the right gully wall. We had spent a lot of time on this problem, and were determined to make a bold approach to whatever followed - water and all. 300 feet came another crux pitch - a series of large chockstones blocking the Gully. The top one overhangs the others, and a considerable volume of water was flowing over it, but we were ready for it this time.

"I'm going in" said Robin, and with the countenance of a warrior, he straightened himself and marched into the depths. The water drummed on his anorac, and he made observations on its temperature. In Vibrams he was unable to bridge round the chockstones, but he managed to get a runner on before coming back down through the waterfall, absolutely saturated. I was not so anxious for a soaking,

so before I entered the deluge, I stripped off everything except socks, breeches and a nylon anorac, and left boots, sweaters etc. in the sack. The socks gave me the necessary friction, and I soon hauled myself over the top chookstone. Belayed above that pitch, I could just see the rope hanging in the water. It was rather like awaiting the capture of some gigantic fish. A loop of rope was sent down to Robin for the sack, which was hauled up as quickly as possible, so that the waterfall should not have it. It took Robin, poor soul, several submerged minutes to undo the sling, but without boots the actual climbing was not hard.

We opened the sack and sorted out the salvage. I was particularly anxious that my dry clothes should remain separate from the Costello washing. We put everything back on again and climbed together quickly, so as to get warm again. The next main obstacle, as far as I can remember, was a straight-forward, though rather loose, chimney of about 60 feet. There was no hesitation now; in fact, if a climb is not going well, I would recommend, dear reader, that you abandon it and go stand fully clothed in the first suitably sized waterfall you can find: this will be found to awaken the inner man. A half-soaked approach to a climb is no use at all.

At this stage, about 850 feet up, the gully was divided by a huge stack of terribly rotten rock. Of course, the direct line ran straight up the centre of this where there was a narrow chimney. Most of what we climbed we could have picked up and brought back with us, but for the fact that we were in too much of a hurry. After this we were able to move together most of the time over indifferent rock back into the main bed of the Gully. had dried out considerably by now, and were really enjoying the climb and the view, framed by the Gully walls, but it was getting late, and there is a fair walk from Sgurr na Fheadain to Glenbrittle. The upper part of the Gully is narrow and the walls virtually unclimbable. We wondered whether to escape while we could, but decided to go up as far as possible moving together. We went on as far as the last pitch, but decided not to start it, since it was

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beginning to get dark and we were not sure what lay above. We therefore retreated until the Gully walls were climbable and made an exit. A short scramble up the Ridge, and we would look down at that last pitch. We need not have worried; after a short, steep problem, there is nothing but a scramble to the top.

On the way back from Skye we stayed a night in The Lakes, and spent a gloriously fine day on Gimmer, but I can hardly remember what we climbed.....

## NOCTURNE by P. Holden

One of the cardinal rules of mountaineering is that one should endeavour never to be caught going up when darkness is coming down, particularly on a difficult rock climb. But of course this situation can arise (I will refrain from suggesting that this is due to either lack of experience, lack of preparation, lack of consideration, or plain stupidity). This uncompromising situation has - shall we say "come the way of" myself and a companion twice just recently.

Saturday of the "bonfire party" week-end broke cold and wet. Pete Hay and I decided to walk up the Pass and see what the conditions were like, having decided to start on Shadow Wall, if anything. Fortunately as we drew near to the crags, the rain stopped and the wind began to dry the By the time we had reached the foot of "the Wastad" rocks. conditions were reasonable, even if it was a little cold. We did Shadow Wall, with me having some difficulty leading We had warmed up somewhat now, so what next? Ideas differed; I was all for Lion, Pete was more for Unicorn. A compromise was reached, thus: we would do the first pitch, which the two share, and then if the two pegs were in on Unicorn we would do it, but if there was only one peg in, we would do Lion. On arriving on the shelf after leading the first pitch, I was pleased to find a party halted on Unicorn because there was only one peg in place. I pulled the rope and up papped Pete to the shelf, and I said "so there!" But Pete being a man of resolute

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character, decided to have a look at the one peg. Of course, not content with just looking, after an excellent piece of climbing, he was up the pitch, without heed to my words "But what about Lion?"

So two routes had been done, with time enough for a third - a route on the Grochan with which to finish, (the day or the climbers?). I had a particular route in mind Eventually after looking at but Pete was not so keen. my route from all angles Pete had his way. 3.15 p.m., and we were at the start of Brandt. first pitch proved a bit stubborn, but once the runner was on we were away up the first pitch and then over the major difficulty - the "V" chimney, which proved not too hard. But time had flown and it was getting late so Pete set off on the long pitch over the slabs. After some reconnaissance he decided that he did not like the look of it, and so contrived a belay some 25 feet out from me. prospect before me was none too good, it was late, I was cold from waiting at the last belay, the slabs were very wet, we had no guide-book (having lent it to somebody else), and I was not sure of the route. Still nothing was to be done but climb, so off I went (upwards, not The slabs, though delicate, were easy angled but for a short vertical wall, and I was soon over them. But now it started to rain and it was dusk. I made for a steep crack in a corner and put a runner on, then climbed the crack with difficulty. Just before the top of the crack I put another runner on and tried to work out how to get from the crack onto the sloping ledge above. The solution was urgent because it was now almost Friction on the rock was poor and thus made the final move more difficult, especially so because as I moved, the last runner played a merry tune as it rattled down the rocks, but now I was up the pitch. The next five minutes were spent wandering and feeling for a belay. Eventually a good belay was found, and Pete was able to come up. Now it was pitch dark, and neither of us knew where we were. Pete decided to explore a ledge to our right, and soon disappeared from view. some time and all the rope had run out, I decided that he must be belayed, and so moved on, following the rope.

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After about 60 feet, the rope came directly down to me over a very steep wall. Some wall to do in the dark, I thought, but tackled it in good faith. Actually the wall was overhanging, and with much difficulty I reached the top (25 feet from the ledge), but to find that there was only grass to pull on over the top. Descent was decided on, but this proved too difficult, and I was instantly off the rock and swinging in the darkness, shouting for Pete to let me down. The next wall I tried was not overhanging, and I managed to reach Pete, who had been very worried by my antics. After two more blind pitches we were on top of the crag.

The question then was, would we get to the bonfire party before all the food and drink were devoured. answer - yes if we could find the way down. This could have been awkward, but luckily we found the descent chimney quite quickly. As a precaution against slipping on the mud (I was wearing "Masters"), we protected ourselves with the rope. Progress was made easier each time a car came up the Pass, because we could see our route by its headlamps. At one time, on the steep-sided gully, I thought such light was someone right behind me with a torch, so I turned around and spoke to nobody. have thought I was mad. Just as we reached the bottom of the gully, a car pulled up the road, and voices began hailing us. Very soon we had coiled the rope, collected the sack, skated down to the car and so back to Tyn Lon.

Pegging in Dovedale. Once again I was teamed up with Pete Hay, and we were at the bottom of Ilam Rock at about 11.30 a.m., ready to start the "Wong Edge". Pete had done very little artificial climbing, and I had done none. The route was by way of an overhanging crack for 30 feet, then there was either traverse left onto the "Original Route", or proceed straight up the edge to the top of the pinnacle. We decided on the latter as a better line. We tossed for pitches, and I got the first pitch. Weighted down with ironmongery I banged in the first peg at about 5 feet, clipped in the rope, then an etrier, then stood up. Bang! - I was on my back,

dumbfounded, amid peals of laughter. With a more determined effort I replaced the peg. My progress was slow at first, but speeded up after I had got the system, and after a few tangles, much exertion and a couple of hours had passed. I had pegged the overhanging crack. Lunch time; I came down, and we ate and drank (much After about half an hour's relaxation, it was needed). Pete's turn to defy gravity, and mine to defy the cold. By the time Pete had reached my last peg, it had started to rain and become very cold. Peter, after having put in two difficult pegs at the top of the overhang, decided to descend a few feet and do the alternative finish, i.e. the traverse onto the original route (a very sensible idea as the first part was overhanging and thus dry), but by now time was running short, and this pitch would have to be easy if we were to finish in Like all good pitches it had its difficulties. which consumed much time, but also when Pete reached the back face of the pinnacle it was so wet that instead of being able to free climb it, he had to peg it to a stance and belay. This belay was not ideal, consisting of a poor peg, a poor wedge, and a poor jammed nut. time Pete was secure it was almost dark, so I had to collect together the equipment which was strewn about. Now it was really dark, and there were twenty pegs between Pete and myself.

Just as I was about to start climbing, a few club members came along to pick up some equipment, so I left them to knock out the first peg for me, then they were off back to the cars. To make matters worse, the ropes had decided to jam round a corner, and this made it very difficult for Pete to manage them in answer to my plaintive requests. Luckily I had a torch with me, so I could at least flash it occasionally to give me an idea where the ropes, pegs, etriers and hammer were relative to one another. The pitch up to the traversing line was pretty straight forward hard work, having to leave only But now it was late, and we had other people (who were waiting for us) to consider; so now it became a matter of getting off the climb with just the karabiners. Half-way along the traverse I managed to

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loosen an etrier that had come untied, and all I could do was watch it fall to the ground. This mishap made progress very difficult, and I wasted a lot of energy hanging onto karabiners whilst moving the only etrier. Eventually I reached Pete, only to find that pieces of his stance kept hurtling to the ground. Pete then performed wonders in sorting out the ropes at the belay, tying me on three times, and untying himself. This procedure was quite worrying, and I was glad when it was over. From the belay Pete climbed down whilst I aided him with the rope. Then I followed, protected by the rope passing through the karabiners at the belay.

Now we were down, but what a state we were in - cold, wet, tired and filthy dirty. We packed the gear away into the sacks and we were all ready to go. Unfortunately our ways were to opposite sides of the dale, and as we only had one torch between us, we could not separate. Thus I had to go with Pete to his car, and he was to run me back to Ilam where a car was waiting for me. As we were walking back along the date we met Sandra, who was carrying a torch like a searchlight. She had come to look for Pete, knowing that he had no torch, and thinking that he might have fallen into the river, which was now flowing at the top of its banks.

Thus it was that on two consecutive club meets, Pete Hay and myself finished our climbs in the dark. I suppose the only thing to be said is that we finished the routes we had set out to do, and do not feel sorry for having done so.

## Pyromania by A.J. Fowler

Once upon a time, many many moons ago in the wilds of North Wales, there was held a celebration - a veritable binge - at a place known to many as "Chez Daff", "Ants Retreat", or "The House that Daff re-built". The binge was ostensibly to celebrate some explosive incident on 5th November years and years ago. The real reason was, of course, the love of the club members for a right-old

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knees-up and booze-up - not forgetting of course, the delightful prospect of playing with fireworks!

People started rolling up at Chez Daff (hereinafter referred to as C.D.) during Saturday, and Tony and Gill (hereinafter referred to as "mine hosts") had the decks cleared for action. It was assumed that most people were saving their strength for the evening's festivities, but several people were known to be out walking and some even ventured to climb!

As evening approached, so did the guests, armed with mattresses, air beds, sleeping bags, beer mugs etc. Over half a dozen cars were hidden along the tracks and roads approaching C.D., at places designated at great length by mine host. Despite greatly detailed instructions however, the rear lights of one of the vehicles were seen disappearing over the top of the hill at the back of C.D. - the driver arriving eventually after a round-trip taking in some far away places with odd-sounding names -"Auchtee mucktoo" or something. People waiting down in Tyn Lon were rather "put-out" to find that two of their number were still out on the mountains after dark, theirs being the only car on the Pen-y-Pass car park. "happy wanderers" arrived just in time to meet their rescuers as they toddled out of Tyn Lon - some having been torn away from the local pubs. Later our two worthies followed the trail of vehicles up to C.D.

It was said that, during the evening, a frightful apparition in the garb of an old sea captain (sou-wester an' all) forced many a mini van driver to stall his engine, by jumping out in front of them from the darkness - on the poor mini-driver stopping to search for this phantom, all that was left where once it had stood, was the sign of a fish, nothing more.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the girls, who had been toiling ceaselessly for hours, had worked wonders with the food (as always) and a veritable feast was laid out along with an ample supply of booze, brought in a week previously by mine host. The party was going with a

## PAGE TWENTY-THREE

swing. Outside, the rain started, but all was dry within C.D. (dry in the nicest sense of the word of course). As the cottage became warmer, and the atmosphere thicker, so the beer attained that mysterious state where it becomes endowed with all the qualities of an elixir of life.

The beery fug was sliced through by the announcement that the rain had cleared and the fireworks could begin (how true this was!) The rain had been but a shower, and the fire was readily lit; and once blazing merrily, shed its light on dozens of happy faces. To tunes from someone's record player, dancing began, and fireworks were set off to soar into the now clear night sky.

Retiring a few yards from this cheerful scene, the setting of the festive fire was truly beautiful. In the foreground the bodies darting round, dancing round, sitting staring into, (or even jumping over!) the fire, all illuminated by its glow, and behind, and all around, the wildness and apparent loneliness of the hills, somehow nearer and larger than usual. Away below stretched the black still lake, with the lights on the distant hillside reflected from its surface, a truly magnificent setting.

Back to the fire and hot dogs, and baked potatoes — but what's this? Out of the darkness looms "one man and his dog" — this surely cannot be the cabaret? This vision steps within the circle of light and is straightway fixed by 30 pairs of beery eyes — he cringes — then, summoning up courage, asks for mine host, who duly approaches and proceeds to talk with this stranger of the night. Snatches of conversation drift across from the trio — "six alsations", "tear people to pieces". The conversation becomes animated — gestures supplement words, mine host's vision becomes contorted — this truly is a fearsome sight which disheartens the stranger, who leaves with all haste, following the direction indicated by mine host's finger. Thus ended the cabaret.

As the fire died down and fireworks ran out, folks wandered back into C.D., where once more, the party got under way. Feats of strength were organised, including

the usual beer bottle lark - won by a tall red-haired chap with a foreign accent.

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In the early hours of the morning, beds were brought out, and people gradually dispersed into respective rooms or corners. By this time the moon was out, and from the terrace of C.D., one had a wonderful view towards Snowdon across the Llyn, and in the other direction, out to sea.

Breakfast for the multitude was the order for Sunday morning, and this was prepared by some in the kitchen, and others in the sunshine of the front garden. A trip down to the ice-cold stream was well worthwhile on such a morning.

Of those who left early, several did routes in the Pass, and others walked - some like myself, went along to watch, (signs of old age, methinks). However, the walk down from C.D., to the Vic was truly glorious, and, having a chauffer waiting at the Vic made a perfect ending to the walk.

Our thanks are due to Tony and Gill for their organisation and hospitality, to the girls for their feast, and to John Pettet and Co., who so ably and zealously looked after the beer question.

# TYN LON WORKING PARTY, 23/24, November, 1963 by Bill Yale

The privately organised working party held in November turned out to be an outstanding success. Instead of the small party of about half a dozen as originally intended, fifteen members joined in. The main objects were to complete the construction of the new food shelves and to do as much as possible towards completing the drying room. The weather was perfect for both these jobs - there was a deluge.

On arriving at the hut on the Friday night it was found that the cottage had been flooded at some time during the previous week, for there was water to a depth

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of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in the old dining room and the floor of the new dining room was coated with a thick layer of black mud. Before any of the proposed work could be started on the Saturday morning it was "all hands to the pumps", and half the morning was spent baling out and trying to stem the torrent which was pouring off the highway into two rapidly rising lakes just outside the front doors. A desperate, but futile, attempt was made to make the water go down the proper drain, and in the end we had to rely on a dam built across the entrance to the front garden.

Both the main jobs progressed satisfactorily. The insulation of the walls and ceiling of the drying room was completed, the structure being effectively sealed, and the door made and hung, whilst Ken Reynolds proceeded with the electrical work. There now remains only the construction of an outlet duct and the fixing of clothes hangers before the heater is finally installed. The hope of getting it finished for this winter was, I'm afraid, somewhat ambitious.

The half finished food shelves were rescued from the flooded dining room, completed except for the final painting, and fixed in position in the kitchen by the Chairman and the Treasurer. (For the information of any weather-bound hut-dweller with some time at his disposal these shelves still need a further coat of white undercoat and a final coat of white gloss. The paint is on the shelf over the out-house door).

Another essential job, accomplished by Basil Jones and Joan Gabriel, was the lagging of all the water pipes. Although this will help to prevent the over-night freezing of the pipes when the cottage is occupied, the danger can only be removed entirely by draining the system completely. To do this the main stop-tap outside the out-house should be first turned off, then all taps inside the building (over the sink and wash-bowls) opened. Finally the drain tap over the outlet to the proposed showers should be opened with the spanner provided, and the W.C. flushed to empty the cistern.

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An attempt was made to seal round the chimney of the stove in the new dining room, but although this made a considerable improvement the stove will not function satisfactorily until the mica door panels which are now broken have been replaced.

After the storm which flooded Tyn Lon it was very disheartening to find that the out-house roof was again leaking badly. This, in my opinion, was not due to Fred's previous work being ineffective, but because insufficient area had been covered, and the water was coming in elsewhere. In fact up until that moment it had proved to be excellent, and it was thought that the trouble had been completely cured. I think that a few pounds spent in covering a bigger area of the roof and also the junction of the two cottages with this concoction of Fred's would be well spent. It is the only material which has had any effect at all so far and I am sure that it would cure this nuisance once and for all. The entire roof does not need treating, but only about 25-30 square yards, and the cost, which is being looked into, would depend on the minimum quantity of this preparation we could purchase.

May I sincerely thank all who so willingly took part in this working week-end - a great deal was accomplished. We were indeed pleased to see John Urwin and Alan Green with us again, with all their enthusiasm so familiar to us. We also had, of course, the usual staunch support of Fred Price.

# ANNUAL DINNER MEET

A report of the Annual Dinner Meet will appear in the next issue.

#### PAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

## The Joys of Mountaineering by J. Pettet

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Christmas in Glencoe, burning sunshine on the nape of the neck, the bite of crampons on hard packed snow, the early-morning echo of freshly cut ice skidding down an ice-slope - all these were soon to be ours.

Tony and I sat rivetted in the A.35 G.T., grunting through two booming hangovers. It was Christmas Eve. The monotony of the M.6 was broken only by our stops every fifteen minutes to scrape frozen mud off the windscreen. Soon Penrith, egg and chips and a jug were behind us, and on to Glasgow, where greasy grills and more jugs were consumed, and the night beckoned us on to our promised land.

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Eleven o'clock brought us to the side of the Austin 10-34 vintage. We had finally arrived after 16 gruelling Buchaille Etive Mor stood proud and challenging by the light of a cloudy moon. Stretching our cramped limbs, the cold night air smothered our welcoming shouts. No replies. Only after much blasting of horns did the other half of our party state its position.

A sheltered little hollow revealed a frost covered Arctic Guinea Minor surrounded by the rusting cans of 3 days meals. After 3 ferries our expeditionary gear, complete with phonograph, musical discs and numerous bottles of "medicine" were piled up. There followed  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours of cursing and fuming as we used a peg hammer and an ice axe to insert tent pegs in the ice-caked earth. As the last peg was driven in, the first snowflake descended. Oblivously we dived inside and soon the land of Nod was upon us.

Christmas morning was brought to our notice when the sound of the "Holden foghorn" violently shook the tent. A quick look out revealed Joe and Pete, with depraved grins on their faces, eating out of half-opened tins, to the accompaniment of soft, swirling drizzle. I tried to pretend it was all some horrible dream, but alas my companion was not for getting out, whether for obtaining

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or getting rid of water, so we lay there festering until the ultimatum came from the other tent regarding our day's activities. I fetched the water - but reluctantly! We soon learned from Joe and Pete that big things had been done before we arrived. Great Gull; on the Buchaille had finally "gone" in the moonlight, all the peaks above about the 2,500 foot mark were just waiting to be attacked. As we talked, the drizzle subsided; so quickly taking hold of axes we set off across the moorland in the direction of S'Ron A Criess, not wishing to tackle anything larger, as the hour was late and dinner was booked at the Clachaig.

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The snow started at about the 1,500 foot level, but did not become reliably packed until about 2,500 feet. By then it had started to snow sporadically with the wind driving it in swirling flurries around our heads. We chose one of the many gullies on the North-West face, and though technically they did not require a rope, they were still not without interest. The top was reached without any difficulty, and after a quick "drag" we were descending quickly by the West ridge. This proved far more interesting than our ascent and by the time we were out of the driving snow and into the rain, it was virtually dark.

On the way back to our tents, the snow melted on our clothes, two of us fell in bogs, and the four of us waded across an ice-packed river (one managing to submerge himself). The tents did not look very inviting - any ideas about getting into dry clothes were soon shattered when the tender strains of a Christmas carol sung by Liberace came drifting across the rain-swept clearing. One who shall be nameless had tried to inject a little festivity into the proceedings by putting a record on the turntable. Another who shall be nameless decided on our course of action and with an adroitly clean swing his ice axe fragmented the disc, and thirty minutes later four very damp Ceunanters were supping ale. The rain made us run for the tents on the way back.

Boxing Day was heralded by the tattoo of rain on the

#### TWENTY-NINE

fly sheet, and the crescendo of a fast-rising river 10 yards from the tent. The mind registers six things that day.
(1) Continuous rain (2) Calling out the A.A. to tow Joe's motor into Ballachulish (3) Following the A.A. convoy in the driving rain without windscreen wipers (4) Tennants Export (5) Scotch (6) Demerara Rum.

The 26th was the day on which the water level in the tent soaked my last packet of fags, and got through my second sleeping bag. That was the last straw, and with scream of frustration I threatened to pull out and go to the Lakes where conditions might be better. My companions were made of tougher stuff though, they wanted to sit it out for a while. The last one broke down about lunchtime, and by 2 o'clock, we were driving across the misty lunar-like landscape of Rannoch Moor; the wind buffeting us across the whole width of the road. Visibility was down to 200 yards.

Seven hours later a famous Youngers house in Penrith was doing a roaring trade. A dejected pow-wow was called: the Lakes lay East and "Brum" was to the South, which was it to be? We chose the former and ninety minutes afterwards, four reeking carcasses were established in front of the fire of a friend's rented cottage below Helvellyn. We were told the weather had been very bad over Christmas with much mist about, and the day before we arrived, it had actually been snowing! Two or three hours after midnight or rather, many pints and much cheese after midnight, it was generally agreed that the dawn would be most unfavourable for doing anything serious.

At an hour closer to lunchtime than breakfast, a bleary-eyed head poked out of a fugged-up window confirmed the previous night's forecast. Five minutes after opening time, we had bade goodbye to our indulgent friends, and the M.6 beckoned us South.

Anyone interested in a mountaineering holiday in Scotland next Christmas?

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#### B.M.C. NEWS

## Gwern-y-Gof Uchaf

Mr. Williams of Gwern-y-Gof Uchaf has complained that people approaching Tryfan across his property sometimes climb over his fences instead of using the stiles which he himself has provided. People coming from the direction of Capel Curig, past the lower farm and London Mountaineering Club hut, turn up the mountain too soon, thus having to climb over the fences instead of going on a little further towards his house and across by the stile.

At a time like the present, when we are having so much trouble with landowners and farmers, it is vitally important that we should maintain good relations where we have them. Mr. Williams is one of the most co-operative farmers in the region, and has for many years welcomed visitors to the hills over his land. It is therefore most desirable that all climbers and hikers should observe his reasonable wishes in this respect.

## Equipment Sub-Committee

Short reports on the Hiatt Karabiner, Wire loops, Belay loops, and Pitons will appear in the March edition of "Mountaineering". Trials are also being made on the Kernmantel rope.